

Tobacco **LIVE FREE OR DIE**

NH TOBACCO PREVENTION & CONTROL PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of
Findings in the
State of New
Hampshire

Released by:
New Hampshire
Tobacco Prevention &
Control Program

Date of Release:
July 2002

2001 New Hampshire Restaurant Smoking Policy Survey Results

Exposure to secondhand smoke is one of the leading causes of preventable death in the United States, accounting for approximately 53,000 deaths each year. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified secondhand smoke as a cancer causing substance. Those exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to develop respiratory infections, ear problems, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, allergies, heart disease and asthma. Due to the associated disease and the fact there is no safe amount of exposure to it, exposure to secondhand smoke is a critical public health issue.

The New Hampshire Indoor Smoking Act, which went into effect in 1994, restricts smoking in most public places. Today, most NH citizens are protected from involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke throughout much of their daily routines. However, secondhand smoke is still permitted in New Hampshire restaurants. There, secondhand smoke affects both non-smoking patrons and restaurant workers. Restaurant employees have an increased rate of lung cancer and heart disease as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke in the workplace. In 2001, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services surveyed restaurants about their current smoking policies.

Contracted by the NH Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, The University of New Hampshire Survey Center contacted restaurant owners and managers by telephone during June 2001. A total of 400 restaurants' representatives completed a 22-question telephone survey.

The survey results appear on the following page.



Through this survey, it was learned that 44% of restaurants in New Hampshire still allowed smoking.

- Smoking was more likely to be permitted in restaurants that sold tobacco, had a bar or lounge area, sold alcohol or had more than the average number of seats.
- Smoking was less likely to be permitted in fast food restaurants.
- Smoking was as common in restaurants with a children's menu as in restaurants without a children's menu.



20% of restaurants that currently allowed smoking were likely to become smoke-free within the next year.

- 69% of restaurants that do not currently permit smoking supported a local ordinance prohibiting smoking compared to 39% of restaurants that do allow smoking.
- More than 90% of all restaurants (smoking and non-smoking alike) thought their current smoking policy either helped or had no effect on business.
- Restaurants that allowed smoking received about twice the number of complaints about their smoking policy than non-smoking restaurants.

40% of restaurants that allowed smoking were compliant with four provisions of the Indoor Smoking Act.

- 96% had a designated smoking area.
- 87% had a ventilation system that reportedly reduced the level of secondhand smoke.
- 84% had physical barriers between smoking and non-smoking sections.
- 53% had signs marking the smoking area.

Through this survey it was learned that just under half of restaurants in New Hampshire still allow smoking. It was also discovered that few restaurants are likely to go smoke-free voluntarily, however most restaurants would support a local ordinance prohibiting smoking if and when it was introduced. Compliance with all four provisions of the Indoor Smoking Act was disappointing. Clearly, additional steps are needed to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke in New Hampshire restaurants. TPCP plans to address this through the implementation of its comprehensive program. TPCP will use the results of this survey as a benchmark from which to measure future progress in reaching its goals.